Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0035] with the following amended paragraph:

[0035] When a compound of structure II or structure III is used to facilitate a cleaving of [[an]] a (meth)acrylic acid oligomers of structure I, in addition to the (meth)acrylic acid (R_4=H), which forms when water is used as the cleaving agent, corresponding monomeric (meth)acrylic acid esters (R_5=organic residue with 1 to 12 carbon atoms) or (meth)acrylic acid amides (R_5=organic residue with 1 to 12 carbon atoms) also can be obtained selectively. If esterified oligomers are used as (meth)acrylic acid oligomers (R_1=alkyl group or alcohol group), a transesterification of the correspondingly formed monomers of the (meth)acrylic acid oligomers to form the desired monomeric (meth)acrylic acid esters can be carried out selectively by using the compounds of structure II.

Please replace paragraph [0096] with the following amended paragraph:

[0096] A composition comprising (meth)acrylic acid oligomers held in a reactant tank 1, shown in Figure 1, is supplied via a reactant line 2, which is regulated by a reactant valve 3, to a reactant pressure pump 4 acting as a first conveyor unit. By means of a reactant pressure pump 4, the composition comprising (meth)acrylic acid oligomers is compressed and supplied to a mixing device 5. If no additional cleaving agent is used, the mixing device can be dispensed with. The cleaving agent situated in a cleaving agent reservoir 6 is fed via a cleaving agent line 7, which is regulated by a cleaving agent valve 8[[.]] to a cleaving agent pressure pump 9 acting as a second conveyor unit. The cleaving agent pressure pump 9 compresses the cleaving agent and communicates it to the mixing device 5. The mixture of reactant and cleaving agent in the mixing

device 5 is communicated to a heating device 10 comprising a cleaving reactor. The heating device 10 is heated by means of a heat exchanger 11. The cleaving reaction product of the (meth)acrylic acid oligomer cleaving situated in the heating device 10 is released from pressure by means of a pressure release valve 12 and communicated to a condenser 13. Protecting gas is communicated to the condenser 13 by means of a protecting gas feed 14. The condenser 13 is cooled by means of a cooling agent supply 15 and a cooling agent discharge 16, so that high boilers are concentrated in the lower region of the condenser 13, and in a condenser head 17, (meth)acrylic acid is optionally enriched with water that is supplied by means of a pure product line 18 to a crystallization device 19 in which the (meth)acrylic acid is separated from the associated water and further purified. The crystallization device 19 can also be a distillation or condensation device. In the lower region of the condenser 13, high boilers are transferred into a high boiler tank 20 and, on the one hand, can be communicated back into reactants tank 1 or, on the other hand, be supplied to a high boiler disposal 22.

Please replace the heading after paragraph [0102] with the following heading:

--Examples [[1to]] 1 to 3--

Please add the following new heading after paragraph [0117]:

--What is claimed is:--